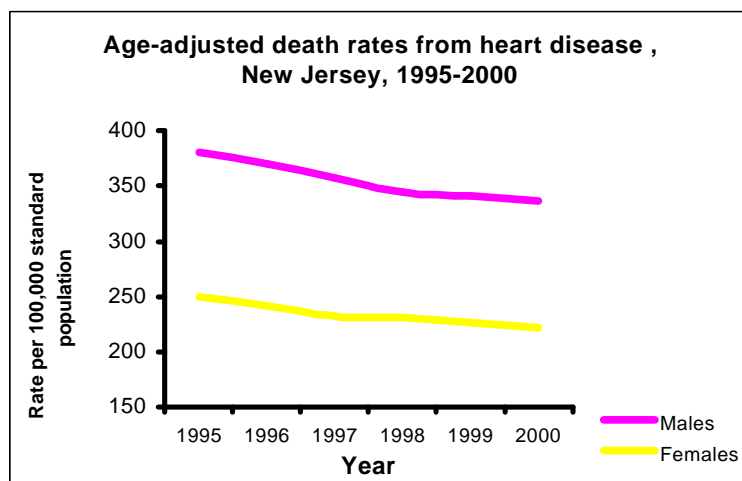




MONTHLY HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET February 2004

February is American Heart Month

- Cardiovascular disease is a major public health problem; it is the leading cause of death in New Jersey and nationally. In 2001 more than 28,400 people in New Jersey and over 930,000 Americans died from cardiovascular disease.
- Cardiovascular diseases include high blood pressure, coronary heart disease (heart attack and angina), congestive heart failure, and stroke.
- Coronary heart disease and stroke, the principal components of cardiovascular disease, are the first and third leading causes of death in New Jersey. In 2001 they accounted for approximately 22,700 and 4,000 deaths, respectively.
- African-Americans in New Jersey have higher mortality rates from cardiovascular disease than do whites, both for heart disease (287.6 versus 249.6 per 100,000) and for stroke (65.6 versus 41.9 per 100,000). (Age-adjusted death rates, 2001)
- While more women than men died from heart disease in New Jersey in 2001 (12,223 versus 10,481) age adjusted death rates are still lower for females due to the concentration of mortality in the older age groups.
- The death rate from heart disease has declined during the past several decades in New Jersey, as it has elsewhere in



the United States. This decline has been attributed to reductions in risk factors and improvements in medical technology. In fact, the median age of death from heart disease in New Jersey increased from 73 to 81 between 1970 and 2000. For stroke, the median age at death increased from 76 to 82 during the same period.

- Heart disease is the leading cause of premature permanent disability in the U.S. workforce. Ten million Americans are disabled as a result of stroke and heart disease.
- Risk factors for cardiovascular disease include overweight, physical inactivity, smoking, poor nutrition, high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes mellitus.
- Recognizing and responding promptly to heart attack and/or stroke symptoms and receiving the appropriate medical care are crucial to survival. Heart attack warning signs can include chest discomfort, pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach, and shortness of breath.

- Some common stroke warning signs include sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body, sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes, sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination and sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/chs/index.html>

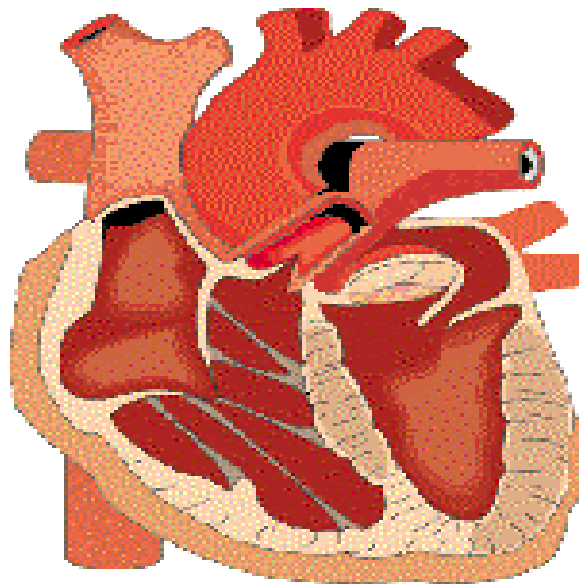
For more information about American Heart Month visit: [American Heart Month](#)

Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics: [New Jersey Health Statistics](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [A Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke](#)

American Heart Association: www.americanheart.com



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